

TO; Senator Ayala, Representative Serra and members of the Aging Committee
FROM; Bette Marafino, President, CT Alliance for Retired Americans
DATE: February 25, 2014

I'm Bette Marafino, President of the CT Alliance for Retired Americans which represents about 50,000 seniors in the state. Our Executive Board endorses all the Bills put forward by your committee and we applaud your foresight in addressing the fears and needs of the seniors in our state.

We note that some of these raised bills had been on the agenda of the last legislative session and are back again including senior safety zones, community spouses allowable assets, and an increase in the personal needs allowance for nursing home patients. Thank you for reintroducing them.

Today, I'd like to focus on three Bills all dealing with the care of people with dementia and Alzheimer's diseases :Raised Bill 5222- An Act Concerning a Study of Funding and Support for Home and Community Based Care for Elderly Persons and Persons with Alzheimer's Disease; Raised Bill179- A Bill Concerning the Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Task Force Recommendations, and Raised Bill 5228-An Act Expanding Eligibility for the Alzheimer's Disease Respite Program.

I recently heard a sober report on NPR that said cases of Alzheimers and dementia are on the rise and society will need to address all the attendant issues that come with these diseases. Training of all personnel who care for these patients is crucial . A couple of physicians I have spoken to say that all too often patients are heavily medicated so they will be easier to handle by nursing home personnel. And this is not always the right approach. An increase in respite care support for the growing population of caregivers is also much needed.

We know that this is a short session and money is tight, but we urge the committee to move the Bills forward this session.